

# GAME PLAY RULES

## I. GAME

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. There is no option to defer. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
  - a. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on 3 downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
  - b. Any time prior to making the ball, 'Ready for Play' the referee **MUST** ask the offensive teams head coach to declare 'Punt or Play'. The coach **MUST** answer at that time or risk a delay of game penalty at the referees discretion.
  - c. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
  - d. If the declaration is "Punt" the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team's 5-yard line, 1st down, with **NO** option to change the declaration.
  - e. If the offense fails to score, after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive Team starts at its 5-yard line
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.



## III. EQUIPMENT

1. All players must wear official NFL FLAG belts and flags. All players **MUST** wear mouth guards at all times while on the field. Game balls should be age specific.
2. Players must wear shoes. Cleats may not be allowed at certain locations. This will be specified by your league organizer or site director. However, cleats with exposed metal are never allowed and must be removed.
3. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
4. Players must remove all jewelry and hard billed hats. Winter beanies are allowed.
5. Players may wear soft shell helmets, halos and sunglasses but they must be secured at ALL times while on the field. Prescription glasses are permitted without a strap.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
8. Participants must bring their own official NFL FLAG belts and mouth guards to the field. Extra belts and mouth guards may be available for purchase.
9. NFL FLAG footballs will be provided.
  - a. **Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the shorts or pants.**
10. Electronic communication between any player with their coach or spectator for their Team is prohibited. If a team or individual is found to be using electronic communication with a player, or coach, at any time, that Team will be disqualified immediately from play. This does not limit possible additional discipline at the sole discretion of the local league organizer.

### TOURNAMENT PLAY

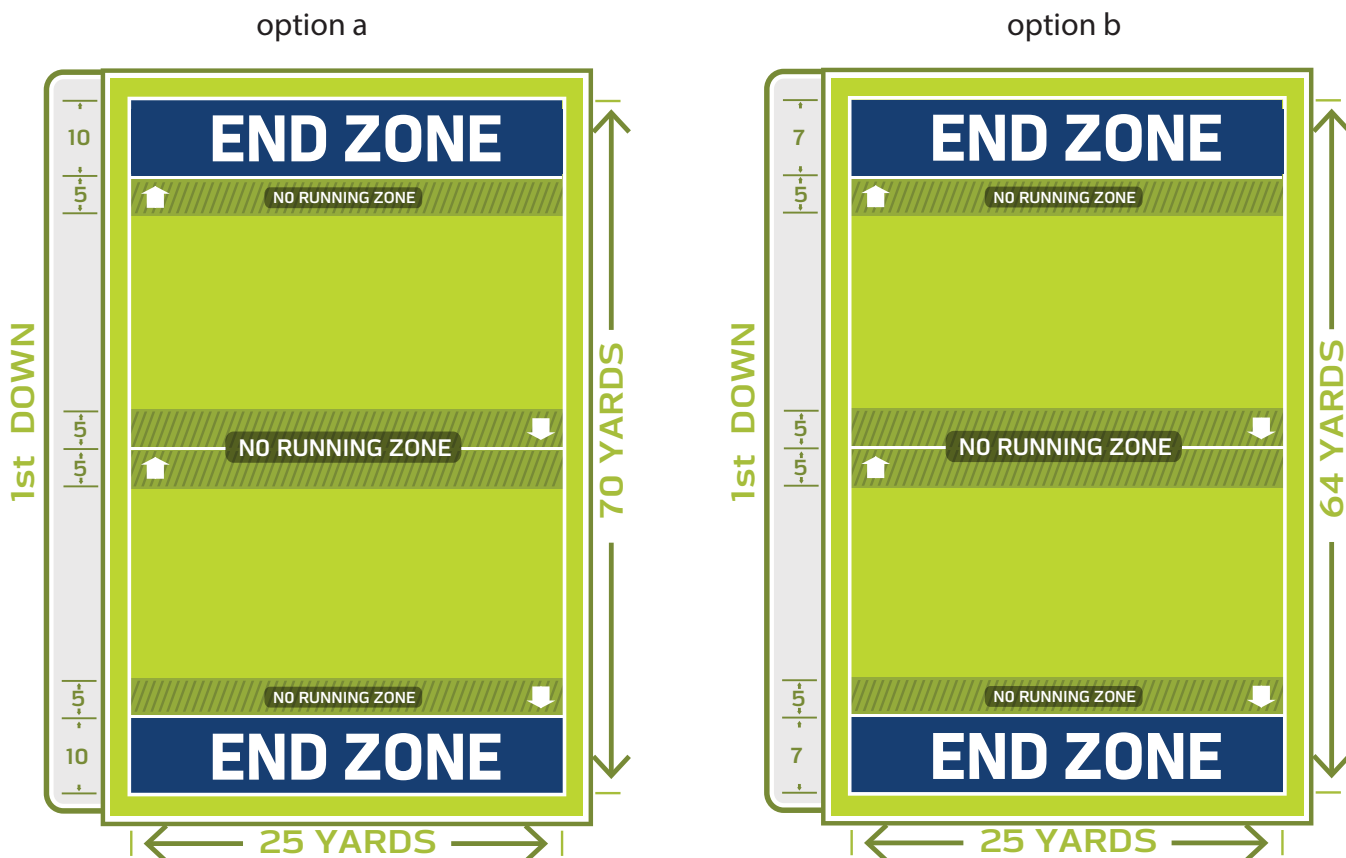
1. NFL FLAG belts and flags will be issued to ALL Teams at check in. Teams **MUST** wear the equipment they are issued at check in for every game played. **NO EXCEPTIONS**. Mouth guards will be available for purchase. Game balls will be provided by NFL FLAG and maintained by the Officials for each game.
2. Teams not prepared to play at Game Time due to noncompliance for equipment will have their game timeouts taken up to **ALL** (3) for the time taken to get compliant.
3. **Equipment Check** - both teams must be checked prior to the start of every game at the discretion of the white hat.
4. If any player is not at the equipment check prior to game time, that player is ineligible to play in that game.
5. Electronic communication between any player with their coach or spectator for their Team is prohibited. If a team or individual is found to be using electronic communication with a player, or coach, at any time, that Team will be disqualified immediately from play. This does not limit possible additional discipline at the sole discretion of NFL FLAG staff.

## IV. FIELD

1. There are two recommended field dimensions.
  - a. 25 yards wide by 70 yards with two 10-yard endzones
  - b. 25 yards wide by 64 yards long with two seven-yard endzones.

Both with a midfield line to gain. No Run zones are located five yards prior to the line to gain and five yards prior to the endzone in the offense's direction.

2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
3. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
4. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
5. The referee will place the ball in the middle of the field prior to the 'Ready to Play'. The ball may NOT be placed closer than 10-yards to any boundary.



## VI. TIMING AND OVERTIME

1. Regular Season Games are played on a 48-minute continuous clock with two 24-minute halves, unless one team gains a 35-point advantage which will end the game unless teams agree to continue without changing the score. The clock stops for halftime, injuries and the Officials' discretion.
2. Halftime is 2 minutes.
3. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 40 seconds to snap the ball.
4. Each team has one 60-second timeout per half. They do not carry over.
5. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
6. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
7. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. **Overtime format**, when applicable, is as follows:
  - a. Home team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
    - i. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.
    - ii. The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
  - b. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
    - i. **Example:** Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.
    - ii. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
  - c. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.
  - d. Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
  - e. Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team.
  - f. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
  - g. There are no timeouts. Each team will be afforded one (1) 'coaches challenge' for the entire overtime session. Challenge MUST be a misapplication of a rule. NOT a judgement call by the official.
  - h. Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.
    - i. Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over.
    - ii. Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.
  - h. Each team has one rules challenge for the entire overtime session.

**TOURNAMENT PLAY:** Games are played on a 24-minute continuous clock with two 12-minute halves, a 1-minute half time, 25-second play clock and three 30-second timeouts per game. Time Outs carry over to the 2nd half if not used in the 1st half.

## VII. SCORING

1. **Touchdown:** 6 points
2. **PAT** (point after touchdown) **1 point** (5-yard line) or **2 points** (10-yard line)
  - a. Note: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
3. Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points
3. **Safety:** 2 points
  - a. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
5. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.
6. After one team is winning by 35 points or more, the game is over. TEAMS may elect to continue but no additional points scored will be added.
7. **Forfeits are scored 35-0 for the winning team. TOURNAMENT PLAY 28-0**
8. The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score sheet. If a coach does not verify the score sheet before leaving the field, the scorekeeper will note on that score sheet and the score will be FINAL.

**TOURNAMENT PLAY:** Once point differential reaches or breaches 28 points, the game is over

## VIII. COACHES

1. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.
2. Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline (see page 17 for grade based and 8, 7, 6U coaching guidelines)
  - a. All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. are required and must remain a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the designated league viewing area.
  - b. Coaches, this is your responsibility to keep your fans and any other team associated members in the designated areas.

### TOURNAMENT PLAY

1. Only two coaches are permitted on the sidelines to coach.
2. Coaches must remain on the sideline except to attend to an injured player.
3. Teams may huddle on the sideline with their coach to get the play but the play clock will not stop once the ball is signaled 'Ready for Play'.